

SEAQUEST
"Smoke on the Water"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN (CGI)

A HAULER, the deep-sea version of the long haul tractor-trailer, chugs its way slowly through deserted waters. "MID-ATLANTIC FREE ZONE" CHYRONS across the screen as we hear:

CASH'S VOICE

Half-way mark, and I'm still alive.

INT. HAULER CAB

Tiny and cluttered, it's a cocoon for its solitary driver, CASH, 30s, burly and nervous. Only the large windows keep him from feeling unbearably claustrophobic. It's taking all his courage to speak "naturally" into his "CB." He knocks back a slug of muddy joe from a cup that reads "Hauler Pilots Go Deeper."

CASH

Looks like you might have to pay off
on that bet, dispatch.

EXT. PERSEID MINING COLONY - ESTABLISHING -(CGI)

CHYRON: "PERSEID COLONY, POLYMETALLIC NODULE MINING COLLECTIVE, MID-ATLANTIC FREE ZONE." A dozen small encampments cling to the ocean floor, connected to a central, domed hub by transparent tubes that snake through and around the rock. A closer look would reveal people and machinery moving back and forth through the tubes between the encampments and the domed hub.

DISPATCH'S VOICE

I'm counting on it, Cash.

It's a smoky, sultry female voice.

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE/HAULER CAB - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

It's almost as cramped as Cash's cab, but pristine, lined with computer equipment and video read-outs monitoring the load, progress, and location of every hauler in the

vicinity. DISPATCH, 20s, is every bit as smoky and sultry as her voice promises. She sits up close to a microphone, staring up at a video display charting Cash's progress. She's nervous, too, but she's not going to show it, either.

CASH

First long-hauler in the free zone
to score a date with the mysterious
Dispatch. And all I got to do is
make one short hop to Djakarta.

DISPATCH

It's a sucker bet, all right.

CASH

And you fell for it. Just like you're
gonna fall for me. Watcha wanna do,
Dispatch? How 'bout we go dancing?

Maybe this would be a good time to see that Dispatch is IN A
WHEELCHAIR.

DISPATCH

Sure, Cash, I'd like that.

The door behind Dispatch opens and ELLEN MORSE, 30s,
beautiful, elegant, and completely under control, blasts in
and leans over the console like she owns it.

MORSE

Give me a full sensor scan of the
area around you.

CASH

I thought it was just the two of us,
Dispatch. Do we need a chaperone?

MORSE

This is Constable Ellen Morse. Now
how about that scan?

CASH

Been there, done that. I'm all alone.

MORSE

Humor me.

Cash hits a few switches. Morse checks her sensor read-outs --
they show nothing but the PULSING SIGNAL that indicates the
hauler.

CASH

What did I tell you? Just me and the
fishes. Ofcourse, that's what all
the other haulers reported before
they disappeared.

Morse and Dispatch exchange a look. He's right.

DISPATCH

They didn't have a date to take me
dancing.

CASH

Maybe I should take you both dancing.
First hauler pilot to make it through
from Perseid in three months, I
deserve something special.

And then he stops, because he's seeing something through his window. Something we don't see. Something that's scaring the crap out of him.

DISPATCH

Cash?

CASH

Oh, my God.

CASH'S POV - THROUGH THE WINDOWS

The ocean is DISAPPEARING, swallowed up by blackness.

MORSE'S VOICE

Cash, come in. What is it?

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE

Morse and Dispatch furiously work the console. All they HEAR is STATIC.

DISPATCH

No - not again.

Morse turns to the sensors. The PULSATING SIGNAL of the hauler is the only thing on screen.

MORSE

There's nothing within two miles of him.

Morse pounds on the console.

MORSE (CONT'D)

Damn it, Cash -- do you read me?

CASH

backs away from the windows. Or tries to -- the cab isn't big enough.

CASH (CONT'D)

No!

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE

The pulsating signal WINKS OUT. Morse and Dispatch stare at each other.

DISPATCH

He's... gone.

And on their shock and despair we FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. SEAQUEST (STOCK)

streaking through the sea.

MCGATH'S VOICE

It's the thirteenth hauler from the
Perseid Colony to disappear in the
last three months.

INT. SEAQUEST - WARD ROOM

Hudson and Ford are facing the vidlink, talking to McGath.

FORD

And they've waited until now to ask
for help?

HUDSON

The kind of person who'll wildcat
the ocean floor usually doesn't like
to ask favors of anyone.

MCGATH

In fact, none of the mining
collectives that make up Perseid
Colony has officially requested our
assistance.

FORD

Then why is the UEO getting involved?

HUDSON

To keep Larry Deon out.

McGath looks surprised -- Hudson's nailed it.

MCGATH

Deon International is the biggest
corporate purchaser of Perseid's
polymetallic ore. It supplies their
entire Asian division.

FORD

Losing that supply has to be hurting
them.

HUDSON

Almost as much as not controlling it
in the first place.

McGath shoots Hudson a look, but lets that pass.

MCGATH

Deon's Regional VP of Mid-Atlantic Operations, Dustin Thaw, has offered to send in their own security forces to safeguard the shipments.

HUDSON

No matter the cost, I'm sure. To the colonists, that is.

McGath scowls.

MCGATH

The UEO takes no position on private business transactions in the Free Zone.

HUDSON

But if SeaQuest can take care of the problem, Deon won't have a chance to get involved.

MCGATH

Leave the politics to the professionals, Captain. Your orders are to proceed to Perseid Colony and find a solution to the problem.

FORD

Is there any more information about the disappearances?

MCGATH

When you reach Perseid, you'll get a full briefing from their security chief, Constable Ellen Morse.

Half the vidscreen flashes an ID photo of ELLEN MORSE, late 30s and still more beautiful than most twenty year-old models. Hudson looks like he's been slapped.

HUDSON

Ellen Morse?

Ford gives Hudson a curious look.

MCGATH

I'm sure you'll like her, Captain. She's just as stubborn as you are.

And with that, he signs off. Hudson notices that Ford is still staring at him.

FORD

Is anything wrong, sir?

HUDSON

You heard the man. Get us to the
Perseid Colony.

Ford nods and leaves. And on Hudson, deep in thought:

EXT. PERSEID MINING COLONY (CGI)

SeaQuest hovers nearby in a busy swirl of mining vessels,
haulers and WSKRs.

FORD'S VOICE

WSKRs are on high-range scan and
subfighters are patrolling the area.

INT. SEAQUEST - MAGLEV

Hudson stands beside Ford. Lucas, O'Neill and Piccolo are at
their stations.

HUDSON

And the security chief?

FORD

Constable Morse will be on board for
a briefing at 2200 hours.

Hudson checks his watch, scowls.

HUDSON

Good of her to squeeze us in.

(then:)

While we wait for the Constable to
grace us with her presence, let's
give the crew some much-deserved
shore leave. Standard rotation.

FORD

Yes, sir.

(then:)

O'Neill, you've got first watch. As
for the rest of you, you heard the
Captain -- what the hell are you
waiting for?

Smiling and laughing, the crew members drift off the bridge.
Lucas turns excitedly to O'Neill.

LUCAS

I hear they're using an ultrasonic
refinement process here, I'd love
to see how it works.

That's when Hudson appears at Lucas' side.

HUDSON

Now that we've got some down time,
this would be a good opportunity for
you to run a complete diagnostic on
the sensor array.

LUCAS

(disappointed:)

Are you evoking my shore leave?

HUDSON

No, I'm ordering a diagnostic and
asking you to see that it's carried
out.

Hudson goes, leaving Lucas to chew on that.

INT. LAUNCH BAY - MAGLEV

Brody, Henderson, Piccolo, and Dagwood wait for the Maglev,
dressed for shore leave.

PICCOLO

Civilization at last. I can't wait.

BRODY

Only you would call a desolate mining
colony in the middle of nowhere
"civilization."

PICCOLO

Civilization means different things
to different people.

HENDERSON

To Tony, it's any place women haven't
heard his pickup lines.

Piccolo scowls as the others laugh. That's when Lucas comes
up to them.

PICCOLO

Hey, Lucas, you're headed in the
wrong direction. Shore leave is that
way.

LUCAS

We're not going ashore.

Piccolo stares at him. Is he serious?

PICCOLO

But the captain said --

LUCAS

I need you to run a full diagnostic
on the sensor array.

PICCOLO
Isn't that your job?

LUCAS
It was, for two years. Now I'm an officer, and I'm telling you to do it.

And with that, the Maglev arrives. The others look at Piccolo sympathetically.

BRODY
Look at the bright side. The women here probably know all your lines anyway.

Brody and Henderson step into the Maglev. Dagwood gives Piccolo a sympathetic clap on the shoulder, then he leaves, too. Piccolo is all alone -- and mad.

EXT. MINING COLONY - CENTRAL HUB

INT. MINING COLONY - DINER ENTRANCE

As Henderson, Brody, and Dagwood stand in the entrance, their way blocked by the gorgeous HOSTESS.

HOSTESS
You two are welcome, but he's not.

She motions to a sign in the window that reads NO DAGGERS ALLOWED.

HENDERSON
I thought apartheid was abolished fifty years ago.

The hostess shrugs. She doesn't make the rules.

BRODY
I guess I'm not that hungry after all.

DAGWOOD
Yes, you are. Go. Eat.

HENDERSON
We're not going in without you, Dagwood.

DAGWOOD
Why would I want to go some place I'm not wanted? I'm not hungry anyway. I'd rather look around.

Henderson and Brody exchange an uncomfortable look. This doesn't feel right. But Dagwood doesn't look troubled at all.

BRODY

Okay -- we'll catch up with you later.

They go inside. Dagwood turns and roams down the arcade, soaking it all in, finding something amusing and interesting in just about everything he sees. There are various push-cart vendors, hustlers, etc. Dagwood is carried along until he finds himself outside of what looks like a traditional British pub. He looks up at the sign, an antique dagger half-way in its leather sheath, that announces that this is THE DAGGER'S SHEATH.

That's when the door swings open and an ATTRACTIVE DAGGER COUPLE comes out, laughing. Surprised, Dagwood presses his face up against the window and stares in amazement.

Everywhere he looks, Daggers. Eating, drinking, laughing, dancing, throwing darts... until his gaze falls upon RACHEL, the spectacular Dagger beauty, smiling back at him. And on Dagwood, wide-eyed and awed, and we CUT TO:

EXT. SEAQUEST (CGI)

hovering with the mining colony as a shuttle docks.

INT. SEAQUEST - LAUNCH BAY

Hudson and Ford stand at the docking port to greet the shuttle, along with SEVERAL OTHER CREWMEMBERS preparing for shore leave. The doors OPEN and out blasts Ellen Morse.

MORSE

Glad to see you're taking this situation so seriously, Captain. Have you granted shore leave to the entire crew?

HUDSON

Just personnel deemed non-essential for the mission, Constable.

MORSE

And if you want to play bridge -- where will you find your fourth?

She marches past them. Ford looks at Hudson.

FORD

Welcome aboard.

They share a look and join her.

INT. SEAQUEST - MAGLEV

She marches in and paces. Hudson and Ford enter, the Maglev starts on his way.

FORD

Perhaps the Constable would begin by giving us details of the hauler disappearances.

Morse looks at Ford.

MORSE

There are no details. One second, the hauler's on our sensors, next thing, it's gone without a trace.

Hudson thinks it through, then:

HUDSON

We'll send subfighters to discretely follow your haulers, try to see what's happening up close.

Hudson hits a button. The Maglev glides to a stop.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

(to Ford)

Work out the details with the constable, then brief Fredricks and Brody.

Hudson heads for the door.

MORSE

I don't think we're done.

HUDSON

Unfortunately, I've got a conflict. Next time, I do hope you'll check with us before scheduling a conference.

MORSE

I deliberately left you time to survey the area and formulate a plan. If I'd realized this was the best you could come up with, I'd have been here a lot earlier.

Hudson freezes, then turns coldly.

HUDSON

I'm eager to hear your better idea.

MORSE

SeaQuest will lead a convoy of haulers to their Asian destinations, allowing our mining collectives to fulfill their contracts.

HUDSON

A quick fix that ignores the larger problem.

Ford watches the increasingly heated exchange, fascinated.

MORSE

I believe I'm capable of prioritizing my own problems.

HUDSON

Too bad you're not as good at solving them or we wouldn't be here.

MORSE

This is my colony.

HUDSON

And this is my boat.

MORSE

Funny, for a minute, I thought it was part of your anatomy.

HUDSON

Damn it, Ellen, I --

He stops, feeling Ford's eyes on him.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Constable, SeaQuest will investigate the problem and deal with it as I see fit.

That's when the lights go off and everything plunges into darkness. After a moment, EMERGENCY LIGHTS come on.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning: Main power systems inoperative. Backup power diverted to life support.

Ford jumps to a communcator.

FORD

O'Neill, what's going on?

ONEILLS VOICE

Don't know, sir. One minute, Piccolo was pushing buttons on the sensor panels, next thing, the computer's going crazy, shutting us down.

HUDSON

Piccolo?

Morse pushes her way past Hudson out of the Maglev.

MORSE

Don't worry, I'll see myself out.

And on Hudson's fury, we CUT TO:

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Lucas works frantically on the console as a very nervous Piccolo stands by him. The emergency lights are still on.

PICCOLO

I was running the diagnostic on the sensors, and everything just went crazy.

Lucas checks the board.

LUCAS

You didn't take the array off-line first?

(Piccolo doesn't understand)

If there's a flaw in the circuits, the system has no way to compensate. And it crashes.

PICCOLO

I didn't know that.

That's when Hudson and Ford appear behind them.

HUDSON

Why not?

Piccolo jumps and turns to Hudson.

PICCOLO

I've never run the diagnostic by myself before, sir.

Lucas pushes one last button, and the regular lights come on.

COMPUTER VOICE

Main power systems now on-line.
Resuming normal functions.

Lucas lets up a sigh of relief and turns to face Hudson, who regards Piccolo.

HUDSON

(to Piccolo)

You're dismissed.

Piccolo shoots him a quick salute and zips off the bridge.

LUCAS

Captain, I hope you're not going to be too hard on Piccolo. He really didn't know better.

HUDSON

Then why was he doing the job I understood you would be doing?

Lucas stops, surprised. He looks to Ford for help, but Ford won't step in.

LUCAS

I thought this would be a good time for Piccolo to become more familiar with the sensor array. And since I've done hundreds of these, I thought a complete diagnostic was an ideal way for him to start.

HUDSON

And you thought being an officer meant you could order your subordinates to do any job you don't want to.

Lucas thinks it over, decides truth is the best course.

LUCAS

Yes, sir.

HUDSON

You do not order someone to do a job you aren't willing to do yourself.

Lucas, humiliated, looks away from the others, keeping his eyes on Hudson.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Do I understand we have a flawed circuit in our sensor array?

LUCAS

Yes, sir, I suspect a cross-link with the power systems. If we re-run the diagnostic with the system off-line, it shouldn't take more than half an hour to find and fix.

HUDSON

And if we test the circuits manually?

Lucas isn't quite sure where this is going.

LUCAS

It would take SeaQuest's entire crew two full days.

HUDSON

Then you'd better start now, because
you're doing it all by yourself.

Lucas stares at him. This couldn't be a joke, could it? But
one look at the Captain's face says definitely it's not.

FORD

You have your orders, Ensign.

Lucas salutes and scurries away. Hudson turns to O'Neill.

HUDSON

Have Fredricks and Brody report to
launch bay at 2400 hours. Commander
Ford has a mission for them.

He notices Ford watching him curiously.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

You look like a man dying to share
some astonishing insight.

He throws Ford a look suggesting he not share. Ford does
anyway.

FORD

I just watched you slap down Commander
Morse and Lucas pretty hard.

(then:)

I wonder if your actions are related
to something other than the mission
at hand.

HUDSON

Call it a bad mood.

(then:)

Ellen Morse and I have a history --
it was my hope never to see her again.

FORD

May I ask where you met?

HUDSON

At the altar. I left her there
twice.

And with that, Hudson turns and walks away, leaving an
astonished Ford to look after him.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. PERSEID MINING COLONY (CGI)

SeaQuest hovering overhead. CHYRON: "Perseid Colony. Three Weeks Since Arrival. Security Condition Normal."

INT. SEAQUEST - CORRIDOR

Piccolo, dressed for shore leave, stands happily over Lucas, who has his head stuck behind an access panel.

PICCOLO

(gloating)

Can't believe you've been checking circuits for three weeks and still haven't found that crossed sensor relay.

Lucas digs himself out from behind wires and circuitry boards. He's hot, sweaty, and tired, the diagnostic tool in his hand weighing him down like an anchor.

LUCAS

Believe it.

Lucas turns back to his work.

PICCOLO

(rubbing it in)

I'd love to help, but shore leave awaits...sir.

Piccolo starts off down the hallway, but his step slows as guilt overtakes him. He turns back to Lucas.

PICCOLO (CONT'D)

Hey, you want some help?

Lucas pulls himself out again.

LUCAS

Thanks.

He starts to hand Piccolo the diagnostic tool, then thinks better of it.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

But Captain Hudson ordered me to do this on my own.

Piccolo accepts that and walks away. Lucas goes back to work.

INT. SEAQUEST - WARDROOM

Hudson sits across from Morse. McGath looks at them from the vidscreen.

MCGATH

Congratulatons to you both. There hasn't been a single hauler lost since SeaQuest arrived at Perseid. We are very pleased. In fact, Dustin Thaw of Deon International would like to thank you personally.

HUDSON

That really isn't necessary.

But the screen splits, and there is DUSTIN THAW, 40s, the epitome of the slick, corporate mouthpiece.

THAW

I'm sure I not only speak for Deaon International, but all the hard-working miners at Perseid, when I thank you for restoring peace to the Free Zone.

MCGATH

I think we can call this mission a success.

MORSE

Or a quick fix ignoring the larger problem.

MCGATH

Constable?

MORSE

We still haven't found a trace of the missing haulers or their crews.

THAW

It's a big ocean. The pirates have probably moved on -- thanks to your fine work.

MCGATH

I'm glad the UEO's strong show of force provided a meaningful deterrent to future piracy.

(then:)

Let's hope this exercise never needs be repeated. Thank you both, and good-day.

And with that, his vidlink clicks off. Hudson smiles ironically.

HUDSON

That's exactly what your mother said
at our second wedding ceremony.

(off her look:)

Lighten up, Ellen. It's the first
personal comment either of us has
made in three weeks.

MORSE

How much more impressive that would
be if we had actually talked during
that time. But then, why should now
be any different than when we lived
together?

HUDSON

If you wanted to talk to me, you
could have called me any time.

MORSE

If I'd wanted to, I would have.

SHE STORMS OUT

INT. SEAQUEST CORRIDOR

nearly running over Ford, who watches her go. Hudson comes
up to him.

HUDSON

Bring everyone in, Commander. We're
leaving in thirty minutes.

FORD

Yes, sir.

HUDSON STARTS TO GO, THEN:

HUDSON

Ask it.

FORD

Sir?

HUDSON

The question that's been written on
your face for the last three weeks.
Ask it now, or get it out of your
mind forever.

Ford looks a little embarrassed.

FORD

What happened between the two of
you?

HUDSON

We could have spent a lifetime
together.

(it still gnaws on
him)

But she always had to grab the shower
first.

Hudson walks away, leaving Ford to wonder if he's really
learned something.

EXT. MINING COLONY - ESTABLISHING (CGI)

INT. DAGGER'S SHEATH

Dagwood sits across from Rachel, scooping multi-colored,
processed food-goo into his mouth, loving every bite. She
watches him adoringly.

RACHEL

I love watching you eat, Dagwood.

DAGWOOD

I like it, too, Rachel. I wish I
didn't have to go.

RACHEL

Then don't.

Dagwood looks confused and unhappy.

DAGWOOD

But SeaQuest is leaving. I'm part of
the crew.

She draws back, her gentleness gone.

RACHEL

What do you do there?

DAGWOOD

They let me clean. And when there's
something heavy that needs lifting,
I get to do that.

RACHEL

They don't let you polish the
captain's shoes?

HE THINKS SERIOUSLY, THEN:

DAGWOOD

I like working on SeaQuest. And they
like me.

RACHEL
They like having a Dagger around
because you work hard and never get
tired and don't complain.

He thinks.

DAGWOOD
But they're my friends.

RACHEL
We're your people.

She takes his hand again. He doesn't know what to do. And
then we CUT TO:

INT. SEAQUEST - CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Hudson sits at his desk, looking up at a very nervous Dagwood,
who stands stiffly in front of him.

HUDSON
Dagwood, you enlisted in the Navy.

DAGWOOD
Yes, sir. Now I'd like to unenlist.

HUDSON
If soldiers could quit whenever they
started feeling homesick, we'd be in
some pretty deep trouble, don't you
think?

Dagwood is stunned. It never occurred to him he couldn't
leave. He sinks down into a chair. Hudson watches him, then:

HUDSON (CONT'D)
At ease, sailor.

DAGWOOD
How long did I enlist for?

Hudson holds up four fingers.

DAGWOOD (CONT'D)
Four weeks?
(off Hudson's look)
Four months?

HUDSON
Four years.

Dagwood can't even begin to imagine how long that is.

DAGWOOD
If I go away for four years, they
won't remember me when I come back.

HUDSON
Every sailor on this boat lives with
the same fear.

DAGWOOD
Even you, sir?

HUDSON
(re: Morse)
I should be so lucky,
(then:)
I'll give you 48 hours leave to
straighten out your affairs, then
I'll send a shuttle for you.

DAGWOOD
Thank you, sir.

Dagwood jumps to his feet, salutes, and heads for the door.

HUDSON
If you're not back on board in 48
hours, I will report you as a
deserter. Do you understand what
that means?

DAGWOOD
I can't come back to the SeaQuest
ever again?

HUDSON
It means if you ever set foot in UEO
territory, you will be arrested,
prosecuted, and jailed for a lot
longer than four years.

Dagwood takes that in, understanding the seriousness of the
moment.

EXT. MINING COLONY (CGI)

As the SeaQuest pulls away and heads off into the inky depths.

INT. MINING COLONY - OBSERVATION DECK (CGI)

Dagwood watches SeaQuest depart through the gigantic windows.
He watches until it disappears in the ocean's blackness,
then turns and walks to Rachel, who has been waiting for
him. She takes his hand and leads him away.

EXT. MINING COLONY (CGI)

As SeaQuest disappears, a HAULER detaches itself from the
other side of the hub of the colony and heads off in the
opposite direction.

HAULER CAPTAINS VOICE
 Hauler 216-B headed for Hong Kong,
 on course and on time.

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE

Dispatch looks nervously over her shoulder at Morse, then:

DISPATCH
 Go safely, hauler.

HAULER CAPTAINS VOICE
 I always do. 216-B out.

Dispatch signs off, then turns back to Morse.

DISPATCH
 Are you sure about this?

MORSE
 (wishing she was)
 It's been quiet for three weeks.
 Maybe it's finally over.

The two women share a hopeful look. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEAQUEST - (STOCK)

cruising through the sea.

INT. SEAQUEST - CAFETERIA

Lucas, Ford and Henderson talk over a cup of coffee and lunch.
 Lucas picks at his food, he's lost his appetite.

LUCAS
 It's not the same around here without
 Dagwood.

HENDERSON
 Get used to it. I don't think he's
 coming back.

LUCAS
 He'll be back.

HENDERSON
 You haven't seen him, Lucas. He's
 found himself on Perseid.

LUCAS
 He's found other daggers, that's
 all. SeaQuest is his home.

FORD
 Those are his own people, Lucas.

HENDERSON

We have to support whatever decision he makes.

LUCAS

Even if it means he goes AWOL?

HENDERSON

Is it Dagwood you're really worried about -- or yourself?

LUCAS

Don't be ridiculous. This isn't about me.

FORD

Both of you came on board at first as outsiders. You both had a lot to prove. I think that's why Dagwood is closer to you than any of us. And why it would hurt you so much if he left.

Lucas is mulling that when the GENERAL ALARM BELL RINGS. Our heroes bolt out of their chairs. Everyone in the rec room scramble out to their stations.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

as Lucas and Ford rush in. Hudson is in his chair, O'Neill is at comm. Brody relinquishes the weapons station to Ford as:

O'NEILL

Open-band distress signal, all channels, range 7000 meters.

HUDSON

(to O'Neill:)
On screen.

VIDLINK

A grizzled HAULER CAPTAIN, 40s, against a backdrop of fire and smoke. Or at least that's what we'd see if the transmission wasn't so horribly broken by static and interference.

HAULER CAPTAIN

We're...attack.. if you're out there....dead and wounded... anyone...

The transmission goes dead.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Hudson turns to Lucas.

HUDSON
Mr. Wolenczak?

LUCAS
WKSRS show a Packard-class hauler
under attack by two subs. I can't
ID'em, but they look pretty creative.

EXT. SEAQUEST (CGI)

as it comes over a deep-sea ridge to reveal a FIERCE BATTLE
in the valley below...a ragged HAULER being RAKED WITH LASERS
by two ugly-looking subs pieced together from about 16 other
subs: all torpedo tubes, rough edges, and attitude. The hauler
doesn't stand a chance.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Hudson stares at the battle on the vidscreen.

HUDSON
(to Ford:)
Announce us. Forcefully.

FORD
Yes, sir.
(then:)
Firing torpedoes.

EXT. OCEAN (CGI)

as the SeaQuest fires two torpedoes. One of the PIRATE SUBS
breaks off its attack on the hauler and spits out DOZENS OF
TINY TORPEDOES...almost like a shotgun blast...the torpedoes
veering, crazily and scattershot, towards Seaquest, VAPORIZING
the two SeaQuest torpedoes in their path.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Lucas' console is flashing.

LUCAS
Incoming torpedoes...
(then, surprised:)
Dozens of them.

Hudson reacts, eyes flashing with fury.

HUDSON
(to Ford:)
Get me ten seconds!

FORD
Firing plasma intercepts and flash
warheads.

Hudson leans over Piccolo, his face close to his ear.

HUDSON

On my mark, break to starboard, full.

EXT. SEAQUEST (CGI)

launches INTERCEPTS and the PULSE-ENERGY WARHEADS, which BURST in a SONALUMINESCENT CLOUD OF BRILLIANT BUBBLES that hides SeaQuest.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Hudson slaps Piccolo's chair, startling him.

HUDSON

Now!

Piccolo jerks the "wheel" hard to starboard.

EXT. OCEAN (CGI)

SeaQuest, hidden by the BUBBLES, turns sharply behind the ridge, disappearing just as the bubbles clear. The confused torpedoes SLAM into the ridge, BLASTING IT APART.

EXT. SEAQUEST (CGI)

as ROCKS rain down on it.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

as it's SHAKEN by the blast.

PICCOLO

We made it.

Hudson doesn't share his joy.

HUDSON

A diversion. The pirates are taking the hauler.

(then, to Ford:)

Get our Specters out, then bring us over the ridge.

FORD

Yes, sir.

EXT. OCEAN - INT. SPECTERS - INTERCUT AS NEEDED (CGI)

as TWO SUBFIGHTERS, piloted by Fredricks and Brody, streak away from SeaQuest and swoop over the ridge into battle.

FREDRICKS

Stay on my wing, attack my target.

BRODY

You got it.

OCEAN - INT. SPECTERS - INT. SEAQUEST BRIDGE - INTERCUT

The Pirates are dodging and weaving, trying to avoid fire from the Specters. TORPEDOES and LASERS are shooting everywhere, the hauler caught in the middle. The seaQuest, it's own plasma lasers firing, moves in to protect the hauler.

O'Neill is listening intently to his headsets.

O'NEILL

(to Hudson:)

The hauler's taking in water. They're going down.

HUDSON

(to Ford:)

Get those people out of there, Mr. Ford.

FORD

(into comm:)

Launch assault craft.

EXT. OCEAN - INT. ASSAULT CRAFT - INT. SPECTERS - INTERCUT

The ASSAULT CRAFT, piloted by Henderson, bursts out of the seaQuest. A pirate sub swoops down on the assault craft, firing a torpedo.

FREDRICKS

(to Brody:)

He's mine. Take out his torpedo.

BRODY

Roger.

Fredricks fires at the pirate sub, which EXPLODES. Brody is rocked by the turbulence, just ahead of him the errant torpedo arcs down towards the assault ship. He's lines up his sights and FIRES. The INTERCEPT vaporizes the torpedo just a few hundred meters from the ASSAULT CRAFT, which attaches to the hauler with the LASER DOCK. The surviving pirate sub flees towards the ridge.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Hudson points at the pirate vessel on the vidscreen.

HUDSON

(to Ford:)

I want him.

FORD

Done, sir. Releasing grapnel torpedo.

EXT. SEAQUEST

as the GRAPNEL TORPEDO shoots out and "grabs" the pirate sub just before it can escape over the ridge...dragging it back towards seaQuest like a hooked fish.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

O'Neill smiles, relieved.

O'NEILL

The hauler's crew is safely boarding the assault craft, Captain.

Hudson settles back into his seat and shoots a smile at Ford.

HUDSON

Piracy in the free zone is over.
Chart a course to Perseid Colony.

And on Ford's smile, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN

Another hauler moves through a tranquil sea. CHYRON: "Sierra Leone Abysmal Plain."

FEMALE HAULER'S VOICE

I wish I could have stayed for the celebration, but a lady has to make a buck.

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE

Morse stands, tense, watching the progress of a hauler on her viewscreen.

FEMALE HAULER

Looks like clear sailing all the way to Hong Kong.

MORSE

(into microphone)
Let's keep this channel open, just in case.

She doesn't turn when the door opens behind her, so she doesn't realize it's Hudson who's come in, carrying two cups.

HUDSON

Never knew you to actually make it to a party.

MORSE

Not when there's work to do.

HUDSON
There's a phrase that conjures
memories.

She starts to bristle, but he smiles and hands her one of
the cups, defusing the situation.

HUDSON (CONT'D)
(hands her a cup)
Peace offering.

MORSE
Thanks, but I won't be at peace until
that hauler is docked in Hong Kong.

HUDSON
The hijackers are in your brig.

MORSE
I don't think so.

Hudson bristles.

HUDSON
It always did burn you to admit when
you needed me to bail you out.

MORSE
No more than it burned you to admit
you were wrong.

HUDSON
They were attacking that hauler. I
can replay the sensor logs if you
don't believe it.

MORSE
Exactly. During the other attacks,
the hijackers never appeared on our
sensors.

HUDSON
Maybe your sensors need an upgrade.

She turns away from him and talks into the microphone.

MORSE
Report, hauler.

FEMALE HAULER'S VOICE
Nothing to report, except boredom.
Just like the good old days.

INT. HAULER

The female hauler, 30s, in a tank-top and fatigues, steers
her hauler, when suddenly it JERKS TO A STOP.

FEMALE HAULER
What the hell?

She checks her readouts, then looks out the window to see
DARKNESS OVERTAKING HER.

INT. DISPATCH

AS:

FEMALE HAULER'S VOICE
It's over-taking me!

MORSE
What is it? Come in!

Hudson rushes over to the console just as THE HAULER
disappears off the viewscreen.

MORSE (CONT'D)
Hauler, come in!

But there's nothing from the speakers but white noise. She
turns and gives Hudson a murderous look. And we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SEAQUEST - WARD ROOM

Lucas and Ford watch Hudson and Morse, who are in the midst
of a heated discussion.

MORSE
Our haulers are sitting ducks out
there. We need SeaQuest leading
convoys.

HUDSON
Forever? SeaQuest is a bandage here,
not a cure.

MORSE
So you're just going to shrug your
shoulders and leave.
(then:)
Then again, that's your style.

Lucas clears his throat.

LUCAS
If the pirates want a sitting duck,
we should give them one.

They both turn towards him, their eyes still flashing with anger.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

We can outfit a hauler and it's load with tracking devices. When the pirates nab it, we follow it back to their base.

Lucas braces himself for the worst -- Hudson and Morse share a look.

MORSE

I like it.

HUDSON

So do I.

(to Lucas:)

Good work, Ensign.

MORSE

I'll have a hauler loaded and ready in an hour.

Morse heads for the door. Hudson turns to Ford.

HUDSON

Have Fredricks suit up.

Ford nods and leaves. Lucas hangs behind. Hudson looks at him.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

If you're looking for more praise, Wolenczak, you already got it.

LUCAS

I think I should be on the hauler, sir.

HUDSON

You believe that one little stripe qualifies you to lead a potentially deadly military mission?

LUCAS

It was my idea, sir. If someone has to risk their life because of it, it should be me.

(off Hudson's look:)

I shouldn't ask a crew member to do something I'm not willing to do myself, sir.

Hudson studies Lucas. After a beat, we CUT TO:

INT. MINING COLONY ARCADE

as Dagwood walks along with Rachel. She's furious.

DAGWOOD

The Captain says I have to straighten out my affairs. What does that mean?

RACHEL

It means you get to play human being for a few more hours, then you are their slave again.

DAGWOOD

They aren't like that.

RACHEL

They're monotones. They are all like that.

She takes his hands in her own and faces him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Dagwood, I care for you so much. You're simple and sweet and good. But you don't understand what they're capable of. What they've done to us.

DAGWOOD

You've never even met them.

RACHEL

Maybe not them, but their fathers or their uncles or their brothers. They've enslaved us to do work too menial for their servants. Sent us out to be butchered in their wars. Cast us aside to starve when we became an embarrassing reminder of the evil they can do.

DAGWOOD

My friends didn't do that.

RACHEL

Their kind, don't you understand?

DAGWOOD

They're not a kind. They're people I care about -- just like you.

RACHEL

Not like me, Dagwood. And not like you. We're Dagers. We belong with our own kind.

She hugs him, holding him as tightly as she can.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

We belong together.

He holds her close, but his face is a mask of confusion. CUT TO:

EXT. SEAQUEST - (CGI)

hovering over Perseid Colony.

LUCAS' VOICE

The hauler is loaded and ready to go.

INT. SEAQUEST - LANDING BAY

Fredricks is suiting up and checking her gear as Lucas emerges from the docking bay.

LUCAS

It's a short-stroke, double-tanked museum piece. You sure you know how to drive it?

FREDRICKS

I learned to pilot one of those on my Daddy's lap. That's not what worries me. I'm going into a fight in a defenseless hauler.

LUCAS

We won't be far. The ore has been treated with isotopes. We can track their radioactive signature from SeaQuest.

MORSE'S VOICE

You better be right.

They turn as Morse stride in, suited up to go.

MORSE

If I disappear, everything I own goes to my cat.

FREDRICKS

Has the Captain approved this?

MORSE

Why should he?

HUDSON'S VOICE

Because there's only room for two.

Hudson arrives, suited up to go.

HUDSON

And I'm going.

MORSE

That's my hauler, and the only way it's leaving this colony is with me on it. I'm not losing any more people out there.

(then:)

What's your excuse, Oliver?

HUDSON

I don't need one. I'm the Captain.

Hudson studies her for a moment, then:

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Let's go.

He motions her into the docking bay, then turns to Lucas.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Thanks for volunteering, Ensign. You reminded me why I had to be on this mission.

(then:)

Besides, I need you at your post.

LUCAS

I understand, sir. Good luck.

Hudson disappears into the docking bay, and we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN (CGI)

The hauler cruises through an empty sea.

INT. HAULER CAB

Cramped and rickety. Hudson is piloting, grimacing at the flight stick. Morse shoots him a look of irritation.

MORSE

This isn't a subfighter, Oliver. Ease up on your dive plane, your angle is too steep.

HUDSON

It's not that. We hit a thermocline, the current's shifting. Now sit down and enjoy the ride.

Morse gives him a look then sits down beside him. They are quiet for a moment. She steals a look at him, then turns her gaze ahead again.

MORSE

Now that you mention it, I've heard this is a rough patch for thermoclines.

Hudson steals a look at her, takes a breath.

HUDSON

My angle might be a little steep.
It's been awhile since I drove a
hauler.

MORSE

I remember the last time.

Hudson shifts awkwardly in his seat.

HUDSON

As I recall, we were on auto-pilot
most of the trip.

MORSE

Maybe if you concentrated more on
driving and less on me, you wouldn't
have proposed.

HUDSON

You didn't have to say yes.

MORSE

You didn't have to leave.

HUDSON

If I hadn't left you, you would have
left me.

SHE GLARES AT HIM, THEN:

MORSE

Your angle is too damn steep.

She hits a switch and grabs the flight stick in front of
her, disabling Hudsons. And on Hudson simmering, we CUT TO:

EXT. SEAQUEST - (STOCK)

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Brody, O'Neill, Piccolo and Lucas at their posts. Ford is
watching the hauler's progress as a blip on the VIDSCREEN.
Lucas seems unusually agitated. Ford moves over to him.

FORD

Is something wrong?

LUCAS

No sir, the hauler is cruising at 80
knots and sensors don't show anything
unusual in the area.

FORD

I'm talking about you, Lucas. You
seem worried.

LUCAS
Terrified is more like it.

FORD
You feel responsible for Hudson and Morse.

LUCAS
They're risking their lives because of an idea I tossed off the top of my head.

FORD
Wearing a stripe means you're not only responsible for yourself, but the lives of others.
(then)
Still want to be an officer?

Lucas thinks. Yeah, he does.

LUCAS
Do you ever get scared?

FORD
Every time I give an order.

They share a moment, then Ford returns to his station. And we CUT TO:

INT. HAULER - CAB

as it's ROCKED by a TREMENDOUS JOLT. Hudson turns to Morse.

HUDSON
You call that driving?

MORSE
We're at a dead stop.

HUDSON
Full power to engines.

Morse shoots him a look.

MORSE
We are at full.

Hudson hits some switches and takes the flight stick.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Ford studies the blip on the VIDSCREEN.

FORD
They've stopped. Something's wrong.
(to O'Neill:)
Open a channel.

O'NEILL
I can't. I've lost them.

FORD
(to Lucas:)
Are they under attack?

LUCAS
There's nothing there, Commander. I
don't get it.

FORD
(to Piccolo:)
All ahead full.

INT. HAULER

The hauler is shaking so hard it feels like it could come apart at any minute. Hudson grips the stick, Morse scans the console displays.

MORSE
I think we're caught in some kind of
magnetic tensor field.

HUDSON
Where's it coming from?

MORSE
I don't know. Sensors are dead.

The ship is ROCKED again. Hudson releases the stick and starts hitting switches.

MORSE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

HUDSON
Shutting down the engines before we
tear ourselves apart.

Morse looks out a porthole...and is stunned by what she sees.

MORSE
Oliver...

Hudson follows her gaze.

INTERCUT: INT. HAULER & THEIR POV THROUGH THE HAULER WINDOW

An enormous, predatory submarine of a design unlike anything they've ever seen before is dead behind them. And if that's not impressive enough, the front of the STEALTH SUB is OPENING like a giant mouth. Opening and moving forward... to swallow them.

MORSE (CONT'D)
What do we do now?

HUDSON

Survive.

And as the hauler is pulled into the maw of the giant sub,
the cab goes BLACK.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

As the enormous submarine swallows the entire hauler like a
snake eating a mouse. Then closes its "mouth" and sails
silently on, leaving no trace at all.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

as the hauler BLIP disappears. O'Neill pulls off his headset
and turns to Ford.

O'NEILL

They're gone.

And on Morse and Ford's shared apprehension, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREEACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Lucas works on his sensors, Ford standing over him.

LUCAS

Our sensors can't get a read on
anything.

FORD

Not even the isotopes?

LUCAS

It's as if the hauler was never there.
Unless our sensors are completely
out of whack, someone is interrupting
our datalink with the WSKRs and
feeding us false information.

Ford thinks for a moment.

FORD

The sensors may lie, but Darwin won't.

Ford heads for the moon pool, Lucas beside him.

FORD (CONT'D)

I doubt whatever is tricking our
sensors is also designed to fool
dolphins.

(MORE)

FORD (CONT'D)

(to Darwin:)

I need you to take a swim. Tell me whatever you see or feel.

DARWIN

Darwin swim. Darwin help Ford find friends.

Darwin swims away. And on Lucas' worried look, we CUT TO:

EXT. STEALTH SUB

lumbering through the sea.

INT. STEALTH SUB - CORRIDOR

Hudson and Morse are led by armed GUARDS down the corridor. They both look like coiled springs, ready to go at the slightest opportunity. They are led into:

INT. STEALTH SUB - COMMAND CENTER

A HALF-DOZEN TECHNICIANS man consoles while another man stands with his back to our heroes facing a DATALINK display. He turns... it's THAW.

THAW

Capt. Hudson... What an unpleasant surprise.

HUDSON

I should have know Deon was behind this. I underestimated just machiavellian they could be.

MORSE

(to Thaw:)

Why steal your own shipments?

HUDSON

So they could bankrupt the mining colony, take over the claims, and still get their ore.

THAW

The savings from not having to pay for it -- and the insurance reimbursement -- more than made up for the cost of the operation. A win-win situation.

HUDSON

(needling:)

You did remember to brief Larry Deon on this.

And on Thaw's displeasure, CUT TO:

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

as Darwin breaks the surface of the moon pool. Ford and Lucas lean over the rim.

DARWIN

Water warm, make Darwin comfortable.

O'Neill and Piccolo share a look of disappointment. But Lucas mulls the information and reacts quickly, racing back to his station.

FORD

What are you doing?

LUCAS

Resetting the sensors to search for variations in water temperature.

(then:)

Got it!

The VIDSCREEN displays the new sensor readout -- which clearly shows a wide ribbon of red stretching away from SeaQuest.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

There's a clear trail of warmer water stretching due north. It's a sub all right -- I'm detecting microparticles of fuel residue.

FORD

Good work, Lucas. How did you know?

LUCAS

The pirates may be able to hide from our sensors, but they can't change the fact that displacement caused by a moving vessel will heat the surrounding water.

FORD

(to Piccolo:)

All ahead full.

(to Brody:)

Flood the tubes. Sound general quarters.

EXT. STEALTH SUB (CGI)

moving slowly along a ridgeline.

TECH'S VOICE

We have sensor contact. Bearing three-four-nine, 160 knots.

INT. STEALTH SUB - BRIDGE

The tech turns to face Thaw.

TECH

Contact confirmed. It's SeaQuest.
Range, 5600 meters and closing.

THAW

Arm torpedoes. Bring us around behind her.

HUDSON

Stand down now and SeaQuest won't blow you out of the water.

THAW

(amused:)

SeaQuest is blind. She won't know we're here until we've sunk her. But you'll be able to watch it up close.

(to guards:)

Shove our guests out an airlock.

HUDSON

I wouldn't do that.

(then:)

Our hauler is set to self-destruct in five minutes. My voice is the only thing that will disarm it. Surrender or we die together.

THAW

You're bluffing.

HUDSON

(shrugs:)

Yeah, maybe.

And on Thaw's indecision, we CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN (CGI)

as SeaQuest moves along one side of a ridge, we PAN UP to see the STEALTH SUB moving in the opposite direction on the other side.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Lucas is studying his console.

LUCAS

The heat band moves around the edge of the ridge. Beyond that we're outside of WKSr range.

FORD

Send a WKSr over the ridge on the starboard side.

EXT. OCEAN

The Stealth sub is rounding the ridge and coming up behind SeaQuest.

INT. STEALTH SUB - BRIDGE

Thaw turns to a tech.

THAW
Status?

TECH
meters and closing.

HUDSON
SeaQuest will be in the clear when
this tub explodes.

Thaw comes to a decision.

THAW
Nice try, Captain, but I'm not buying
it. Have a nice swim.

Thaw motions to his guards, who lead Hudson and Morse away.

INT. STEALTH SUB - CORRIDOR

The guards lead Hudson and Morse towards an airlock. Morse glances at Hudson.

MORSE
'Till Death do us part.

HUDSON
We never got to that, remember?

MORSE
Guess there's a silver lining to
everything.

They suddenly embrace, indulging in a DEEP, PASSIONATE KISS. The guards rush forward and break them apart... and our heroes strike, taking the guards out in a series of lethal, swift karate moves.

MORSE (CONT'D)
It's a shame he didn't go for your
bluff... but they went for mine.

Hudson, a bit shaken by the kiss:

HUDSON
Yeah, good one.

They scoop up the guards' weapons and rush down the corridor.

EXT. OCEAN - (CGI)

The Stealth Sub is coming up right behind SeaQuest.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

Lucas looks up from the console.

LUCAS

There's a heat trail on the other side.

Ford comes to a sudden realization.

FORD

He's coming up behind us.

(to Brody:)

Fire aft torpedoes, wide disbursement.

(to Piccolo:)

Helm, hard to port!

EXT. SEAQUEST - (STOCK)

as TWO TORPEDOES streak out of SeaQuest, which turns sharply to port.

INT. SEAQUEST - BRIDGE

O'Neill looks stunned.

O'NEILL

I've got Captain Hudson.

FORD

Are you sure?

O'NEILL

It's on a secured channel.

FORD

On speaker.

HUDSON

SeaQuest, if you blow me up...

INTERCUT: INT. STEALTH SUB - BRIDGE

Morse has her weapon on Thaw and his techs. Hudson is at the sub's console.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

...I'm not going to be very happy.

Ford smiles and turns to Brody.

FORD

Detonate torpedoes.

BRODY

You got it.

HUDSON

We'll follow you to Perseid, SeaQuest.

MORSE

Your angle is still too steep.

HUDSON

My angle is just fine, thank you.

And on the SeaQuest crew, sharing grins, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEAQUEST - (STOCK)

at speed.

INT. SEAQUEST - CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Hudson faces Morse on the vidlink.

MORSE

Deon International claims to have no knowledge of Dustin Thaw's "rogue operation."

HUDSON

(deadpan:)

They must have forgot to copy Larry Deon on the memo.

MORSE

Maybe Thaw will talk.

HUDSON

I don't think Thaw will be breathing much longer. Deon likes their secrets to go to the grave.

MORSE

It's enough that we know. And so do the miners. If Deon tries to move into the free zone, there will be an uprising. Which even he would see as a lose-lose situation.

HUDSON

If that happens, I want a call.

MORSE

You don't need an excuse to come back, Oliver.

(then:)

I'll even let you use the shower first.

And on Hudson's smile, we CUT TO:

INT. SEAQUEST - SEA DECK

Hudson, holding a bucket of fish, awkwardly approaches the pool, where Darwin swims. Hudson clears his throat and crouches by the pool.

HUDSON

Uh, hello, Darwin. This is Captain Hudson.

Darwin bobs in the water. Hudson, self-conscious, bravely pushes on.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Commander Ford told me what you did. It was fine work. I wanted to thank you.

He holds up the bucket.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Smelt.
(to himself:)
I can't believe I'm talking to a fish.

DARWIN

Darwin a mammal. Darwin like you, too.

BEFORE HUDSON CAN REACT:

DAGWOOD'S VOICE

Captain?

Hudson, more embarrassed than startled, immediately gets to his feet and faces Dagwood.

DAGWOOD

I hope I'm not late.

HUDSON

Frankly, Dagwood, I didn't expect you back. I thought you were happier with your own kind.

DAGWOOD

They aren't my kind, they just look like me.

HUDSON

Consider yourself back on duty.

Hands him the bucket.

HUDSON (CONT'D)

Feed him. With my compliments.

And on Hudson leaving, and Dagwood's glee, we CUT TO:

EXT SEAQUEST - (STOCK)

gliding through the shimmering, emerald sea, and we FADE
OUT.

THE END